(b) There is no proposal for Tata-Singapore Airlines.

Indian Airlines services from Guwahati to Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai

2910. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal for introduction of new Indian Airlines flights on Guwahati-Delhi-Guwahati sector and Guwahati-Mumbai-Guwahati and Chennai-Guwahati sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (d) Indian Airlines operates 5 services per week on Delhi/Guwahati route. Convenient connections are available daily from Calcutta for Mumabai and Chennai, in both the directions for passengers travelling between Guwahati Mumbai and Guwahati/Chennai. At present Indian Airlines has no proposal to introduce services from Guwahati to Mumbai and Chennai.

Reduction in Sales Tax on Aviation Turbine Fuel

2911. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has requested State Governments to reduce sales tax on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) as a measure to reduce financial burden on domestic airlines; and

(b) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Reply has been received from 8 State Governments and one Union Territory Administration. While Nagaland Government has no objection to abolish sales tax on ATF, Maharashtra Government has exempted all the domestic airlines from payments of sales tax on ATF for operating to places other than Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur and Aurangabad in that State for the period 1.6.1996 to 31.5.2001 and Span Avivation (M) pvt. Ltd. for operating to any place in the State other than Mumbai for the period 1.4.1997 to 31.3.2002. The other six State Governments/UT Admn. have not agreed to abolish sales tax on ATF. Reply from the remaining State Governments/UT Admn. has not been received so far.

Diversion of flights to Ahmedabad Airport

2912. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMBANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian airlines has decided to divert some more flights to Ahmedabad airport; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether there is any plan to develop Surat and Baroda airports?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Surat airport belongs to the State Government Vadodara (Baroda) airport has recently been expanded and modernised as a model airport at a cost of Rs. 18 crores.

Upgradation of Umroi Airport (Shillong)

2913. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the long outstanding demand of the people of Meghalaya for upgradation of the Umroi Airport near Shillong;

(b) whether a Joint Team of Indian Airlines and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and Airport Authority of India had re-examined the technical feasibility report for upgradation; and

(c) if so, what is their recommendations and whether Government propose to take immediate action on such recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The team has recommended that while Umroi airport is suitable for Visual Flight Rules (VFR) operations only following addtional works are required to be taken up before operations of B-737 class of air-craft could be considered:—

(i)Acquistion of land for extension of runway from 6000' to 8500'

(ii) Expansion and modification of terminal building.

(iii) Extension of runway and associated pavements.

(iv) Provision of Navigational Aids. VOR/DME & PAPI.

(v) Cutting of hills and provision of boundary wall.

(vi) Development of runway strip. While no provision exists in the 9th Plan, efforts are being made through the North Eastern Council for the allocation of Rs. 35 crores for implementing the recommendations.

Procurement of SCSR Aircarft in Place of MCLR aircraft

2914. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Air India has scrapped its plan to acquire medium capacity long range (MCLR) Aaircraft and instead propose to go in for small capacity small range (SCSR) aircraft;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of the services/fleet likely to be increased thereafter?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (c) Expansion/renewal of fleet by the airline is a continuing exercise and depends on the resources of the airline, traffic requirements, suitability of the aircraft type, viability of operations on various sectors/routes etc. Because of the difficult financial position, Air India is reviewing its requirement of aircraft including MCLR.

Passenger load factor on category II and III routes

2915. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the time, passenger load factors on category II and III routes is low; and

(b) if so, why can't State Governments operate their own air services on contract basis with the smaller private operators?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATIOIN (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) During 1997-98, the load factor of the airlines operating on Category II and III routes has been as follows:—

Name of Airlines	Load factor %	
	Cat. II	Cat. III
Archana Airways	24.0	56.0
Indian Airlines/Alliance Air	68.5	66.5
Jet Airways	54.0	71.0
Sahara India Airlines	65.0	52.0

There is no restrictioin on State Governments for entering into contract with private operators to run air services for them.